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Senate

The Senate met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MEL MARTINEZ, a Senator from the State of Florida.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Lord of Hosts, thank You for being with us. Speak plainly to Senators today, sensitizing them to the needs of our Nation and world. Make them bold to do Your will at a time when evil often seems to have the upper hand. Give our lawmakers the insights they need to set their priorities by seeking to please You. Empower them with the courage to be the heart and hands of truth and righteousness.

Deliver us all from the mirage that there can be safety without You. May what we do here today bring joy to You, our source of hope for years to come.

Today, be especially close to Senator INOUE during this time of grief. We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MEL MARTINEZ led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 14, 2006.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable MEL MARTINEZ, a Senator from the State of Florida, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MARTINEZ thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today we are immediately resuming debate on Senate Concurrent Resolution 83, the budget resolution. We start this morning with 40 hours remaining under the 50-hour debate limitation. Yesterday, Senators GREGG and CONRAD set up an order of amendments to be debated throughout the morning and afternoon. We now have six amendments lined up for consideration with each amendment debated for up to an hour. Votes on those amendments will occur in sequence beginning about 3 o'clock today.

Also, today are the weekly policy meetings. Normally, we would recess for those meetings, but we will need to allow debate to continue on proposed amendments occurring at that time. We will need to use up every other day effectively until the end of the week in order to finish the budget as well as the other item we will address this week, the debt limit extension. Both of those items will be completed this week. Therefore, if necessary, we will have votes throughout each day and into the evening.

On Wednesday, at 2, we will have a joint meeting with the House to hear an address by the President of Liberia. Senators should gather in the Chamber at 1:30 in order to depart at 1:40 to the House of Representatives.

HALABJA ANNIVERSARY

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, briefly, I wish to speak to another issue, an issue that relates to an anniversary that will occur on March 16. On March 16, 18 years ago, Saddam Hussein launched one of the most brutal and indiscriminate attacks against his own people. On that day, a group of eight Iraqi aircraft began dropping chemical munitions on the town of Halabja in northern Iraq. According to Kurdish commanders on the scene, the planes made multiple passes before their gruesome task was complete.

The planes would drop chemical munitions, including mustard agent and nerve gas, for 45 minutes. After they had gone, another group would come 15 minutes later to continue the assault with drop after drop after drop. They concentrated their attack on the city and the roads leading out to safety.

I had the opportunity to visit with a number of the Kurdish physicians about 2 years ago who described in detail to me what they saw and what they treated following these gruesome attacks. Many of the victims were drenched in liquid mustard gas, as well as these nerve agents, and others were breathing this toxic vapor. The physicians described to me the fact that this mustard gas and the nerve agents were segmented in parts of little hotels, where one week one wing would get a mustard gas, another a nerve agent, in order that the Saddam Hussein people would see which of these would be the most deadly, which would cause the most suffering.

After the onslaught, Saddam sent soldiers in their protective gear to study the impact in these wings of these hotels and throughout these communities. They wanted to see how effective and which agent would be most effective to be used in the future. The soldiers actually divided the city into

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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